A STUDY OF SIR M. VISVESVARAYA



SIR M. VISVESVARAYA

From The Pencil Sketch By V. R. Rao, B. A.

SIR M. VISVESVARAYA
A STUDY

BY

Y. G. KRISHNAMURTI

FOREWORD BY

SIR PURSHOTAMDAS THAKURDAS, Kt.,
C.I.E., M.B.E., ETC

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B. M. SRINIVASIAH



SIR PURSHOTAMDAS THAKURDAS KT., C. I. E., M. B. E., [illegible]

FOREWORD

It is a real pleasure to me to write this foreword to the brochure which is being issued on the occasion of Sir M. Visvesvaraya's eighty-first birthday, giving the main outlines of his work and worth during a period of over 50 years. Sir M. Visvesvaraya's career, after he retired from service with the Government of Bombay, conclusively proves the advantage of Indianisation of higher posts, as the public has got the best value out of his rich experience as a Superintending Engineer with the Bombay Government after his retirement from active service. The country at large, and not the Bombay Presidency alone, derived the fullest benefit of Sir M. Visvesvaraya's knowledge, great energy, burning patriotism and great driving power, and there is no doubt that a good deal of his best work during the last 20 years is due to the experience and opportunities that he got whilst in Government service.

It has been my privilege to be associated with Sir M. Visvesvaraya on the Boards of Industrial concerns and Committees, and I have been greatly struck by his persistence and perseverence in questions which he always makes his own. He is broad-minded enough to accommodate himself to differences of opinion, and that makes work with him all the more agreeable, and in fact, useful to those who work with him. In Sir M. Visvesvaraya, Mysore has produced a son of whom India can well be proud, and it remains for me to extend to Sir M. Visvesvaraya, on his eighty-first birthday, the wish, which I know will go forth from every corner of

India, " May he live long and well to continue his work and to enjoy the full benefits of the promising seeds which he has sown in the various walks of India's economic and industrial life."

PURSHOTAMDAS THAKURDAS.

PREFATORY NOTE

This biographical sketch is offered as a small token of esteem on the eight-first birthday of Sir M. Visvesvaraya. There can be no doubt that a full critical biography of one of the Makers of Modern India would be of immense interest. It is no hackneyed and wearisome subject on which an animated pen can pounce. But innate sense of reserve and modesty has made Sir M. Visvesvaraya deprecate any attempt at hero-worship and hence the present writer, who had the good fortune to associate with him, relies more upon personal observation than upon adequate documents.

A biography may be digressive or critical and in both cases it is, in the strict sense, " an essay of truth." It cannot be asserted of the present theme that all has been said before, though Sir M. Visvesvaraya has become a legend and a tradition in his own lifetime. Therefore, the author is at ease in his own mind and neither tradition, inhibition nor protest worries him.

This essay is in the nature of an exploration of a vast subject neither inconoclastic nor uncritically eulogistic but the result of hope and curiosity. It does not claim to be a trim model of conformity but is written in a flexible form to which Hazlitt's words " It is vain to object that it is disjointed, disproportioned and irregular " can apply. Its apparent lack of plan or expert knowledge is really the result of a mental holiday free from all conventional procedure.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Kt., who is one of the greatest industrial

magnates of India, for the foreword. I derived, however, no uncertain benefit from the advice and ever-ready help of Mr. M. A. Master, General Manager, The Scindia Steam Navigation Company Ltd., who seeks progress in science and technology — progress that guides all his endeavours, governs all his thoughts, colours all his conversation. I might describe, but describe for ever, but I should never succeed in portraying his purity of feeling. No better proof of his being on the side of youth and change could be found than this slim volume. This brochure is dedicated to Mr. B. M. Srinivasiah, Proprietor, The Mysore Chemical and Soap Works, Bombay, whom to know is to esteem.

I should like gratefully to acknowledge the untiring advice and expert guidance of that celebrated historian, Prof. S. Srikantha Sastri. To all those who extended co-operation during the preparation of this work due acknowledgment is here made, in particular to *Rajasilpi-visarada* B. Subba Rao, Prof. V. Raghavendra Rao, of the Mysore University, Mr. N. G. Jog, of *The Bombay Chronicle* and Mr. I. L. Desai. I am indebted to various renowned artists who have permitted me to make use of their paintings or photographs. In particular I wish to acknowledge the courtesy of Mr. V. R. Rao, of the Royal Academy, London, Mr. G. V. Iswar, formerly of the London Films and Mr. S. R. Iyengar, Palace Artist, Mysore. My thanks are also due to my publisher Mr. G. R. Bhatkal, The Associated Advertisers & Printers Ltd., and The Calcutta Block for having made this brochure an artistic achievement.

Y. G.

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Never did I know distinctly
What "myself" mean for me.

GOETHE

Chapter One

FAR from the noise and glare of Bombay, with semi-detached villas dotted near it, an elegantly constructed bungalow stands, its steps washed by the Arabian Sea. The dwelling is a haunt of beauty and stillness, a sanctuary, an escape from the press of time.

Its lure, which wells up slowly, must be observed, not glimpsed. And while we watch it keeps us under a spell. The scene has a certain gift, it will allow a non-stop-programme of muse.

The whole atmosphere is like a spiritual oases after the choking fumes of the interior of the city.

The rear of the house is bedecked with a grass-plot which yields bewitching aroma. Its high notes are the speckled birds which chirrup. In the vaulted passage stands a servant in uniform, staring like a stuffed pig.

The dimly-lighted hall is lined from floor to ceiling with well-thumbed books. In the centre lies a roll-top desk, with ink-stand without ink. Large and hospitable looking chairs are arranged with unerring taste. The statue in bronze is treated too familiarly by sparrows. The harmony of the interior is only disturbed by the faint echoes of the curring waves or the telephone ring.

The glass-fronted study looking towards the west has an atmosphere of its own attuned to the rhythm of the waves. The Arabian breeze whistles through the painted windows. A bow-shot from there rises the gilded cupolas of the temple of Mahalaxmi, the Goddess of Wealth of India.

In this seclusion, sits a lonely figure in a swivel chair surrounded by the accumulated knowledge of the east and west. Symbolically, Mahalaxmi, is behind this person inspiring him in the task of building up the prosperity of his country and turning towards the west for a happy blend of wisdom and aspiration.

His figure is taut and elastic and his ordinary expression is that of gravity. The invisible creases of his well-cut blue serge suit are smoothed out. He is enwrapped in a multiplicity of coats like a cauliflower. The deep furrows on the forehead indicate that wasting thought is busy there. His eyes, alert, of singular power bespeak an honest and forceful nature. On his features is imprinted resolution. His electrical personality exercises a mysterious charm, in whose hallowed sphere, no idle thought can live.

Turn where we may, the trophies of his genius are full in view. He has the patience of the Great Pyramid.



"I WANT TO GET AWAY FROM THE CROWDS"

His judgement like the diamond merchants scales is evenly poised. He mocks his eighty years with good-humour, the enlivening cargo.

He has focussed all his emotions in one pretty phrase, "Industrialize or Perish." Few persons can put such a freight of 22-carat-gold in a single phrase. He is as sparing in words as a young damsel of fashion is of under-clothes. He torments himself to compress a whole book into a page, a whole page into a phrase and that phrase into a word.

There will be no lack of printed meditation on it when he utters.

He is impelled by affection for the utility that dwells in a field of petrol pumps than in a field of corn. For, his life is distinguished by nothing but its complete immersion in and identification with utilitarian culture. To him the symbols of our time are petrol pumps, sparking plugs and push-buttons.

The 'Back to Nature' period of Cowper, Wordsworth and Thomson is obscured by the swollen cylinders of smoke of the industrial age. Even our country has not escaped the effects of this distinct and decisive revolution. He is not merely affected by it; we might almost say he is made possible by it.

In Mysore he is known to fame as the statesman who diffused the light of knowledge and the amenity of cultivated life. In Bombay he is spoken of as an engineer, whose success is complete and prestige daily growing. The nation reverences him as one who has kindled the ambition of mental improvement, who has

bent the whole force of his understanding to raise their standard of living and on whom mankind may meditate and grow better.

This supreme man has lived his idea. By understanding himself he has led us to a better understanding of our problems. In times of crisis it is to the enfolding sweep of his genius that we turn in hope. We have heard his arresting voice. The loss of tradition by following him is negligible compared to gain in amenity. His name, Visvesvaraya, carries an inspiration even in the mention.

He is an engineer who is an economist, of the sort that engineers are least supposed to be; an essentially original economist. He has riveted the attention of the people from the purely political wrongs to fundamental economic wrongs. The adherents of the Gandhian cult say that the Indian might go in rags, but he must not go in chains. Visvesvaraya pleads that a man must go in chains, so that he may not go in rags. It is a cheering and all but sure guess that in the near future the Indian will go either in rags or in chains

He is no standard-bearer of lost causes but born to give the sluggish masses a good shaking. He has combined in his own self resolution and tenderness, unselfishness and ambition and wisdom and character. The master-spirits whose name thunder down the centuries were woven of 'mingled yarn, good and ill together' Visvesvaraya may have his unlovely aspects too. But they are mere motes before the sunshine of his genius.

He began his life with nothing and it is now coloured by phenomenal success. This is due to no indulgent

providence but to the flame of creative intelligence alive in his mind.

The idea of being lionized has never crossed his mind, though it is not an unpleasant adventure for once in a way.

One feels in his presence that he is in a magnetic field. The more attentively his figure is surveyed the greater the note of interrogation takes shape in the mind. What wonder-working powers he has in him? Does his gospel give a lusty breath of life to this impoverished land?

He errs on the side of stateliness. Before receiving the most insignificant visitor he is wont to call for his turban and settle in an imposing attitude. In his code of a gentleman not to attend to the first-cares of the toilet is a capital error. He is ultra-fastidious on the appearance of his suit. Of so refined a perception and of so delicate an egoism his dress is a tributary of his genius. It does not consist of epaulet, orders and embroidery but of elegant costume. He prefers to receive his visitors calling on him by appointment and is pleased if they do not appear in a red tie and evening suit. He is inclined to the belief that costume is the reflection of the inward spirit. Nothing is more curious than to conform to the whims of a dozen designers. Visvesvaraya is firmly embedded in his faith in dress, as flies in amber. Napoleon and Goethe entertained similar ideas and were deeply impressed by the effect produced by dress. Visvesvaraya receives a stranger according to his dress and takes leave of him according to his merit. He casts a sneer at Cowper who complained:

"Manner is all in all, What'er is writ,
The substitute for genius, taste and wit."

His house is the envied resort of taste and learning. Under his roof juntos of wise men are assembled. Men of talents so rare, of judgement so ripe and temper so mellow are seldom seen. The parties are a close masculine preserve as their talk is above the understanding of women. "It is an uncontrollable truth" says Swift "that no man ever made an ill-figure who understood his own talents, nor a good one who mistook them." The best commentary on this maxim is the discussion of these mature critics round the tea-table and supper trays. It is no durbar where they load their host with all the platitudes in the English language, but a Frank-Criticism-Service. Visvesvaraya does not like to hear the echo of his own voice. He twits prigs and pedants whose words are long enough to run as serials. He reads men and reads to his advantage. His acute tact enables him to disclose or keep back just so much of his opinion. His spirit shows its beauty, grace and vigour in affairs of state and better in private talks.

The aristocracy of all metropolis aspires to mingle with him. Legions of the richest parvenu, the smart set, struggle for admission ticket without success. He strongly believes that the giddy circles of *Beau monde* are no safe place for creative work, which requires to be nursed by solitude.

A film of sardonic reserve flits across his impassive face. A certain degree of seriousness in looks and action is absolutely necessary to make even an illustrious character respected or respectable. It is wrong to



Photo Russell & Co.

SIR M. VISVESVARAYA, K.C.I.E., LL.D., D.Litt., D.Sc., M.I.C.E., etc.
Ex-Dewan of Mysore.

imagine that Visvesvaraya is the most cheerless man that ever sat to pen and paper. Mighty laughs are too demonstrative for him but the smile of courtesy ever illumines his lip.

Visitors with floral expression of their esteem flock the magnificent reception room. Woe to perambulating bores if they commit the error of paying their respects to him. He also does not countenance any exhibition of curiosity. Once he admonished a blue-stocking that he was not a museum exhibit to be stared in that rude way. She pleaded short-sight nay admiration.

A young interviewer over-stayed and dunned and teased him. Visvesvaraya in an air of gay fooling asked him whether or no he was a bachelor. Brightening up the visitor replied " I am a bachelor from choice but lately has shown some signs of wavering." Visvesvaraya gave a poke at his ribs when he exclaimed " keep love in cold storage for few more years."

A gentleman who had struck up a cordial acquaintance with him called on him. He suffocated in his fatness and would have acted the part of Falstaff without stuffing. He had a majesty in his gait, when he walked, not unlike that of a goose but he paced slower. He incarnated be-always-kind-to-animals spirit. After surveying this species new to science one would wonder how it was that for ages men had been content to accept that there were only seven wonders in this world. When that fat fraud saw Visvesvaraya's dog the top-lifts of his heart gave way. The town-crier would have envied his voice. He attempted to speak but tongue denied its office. Then with the air of one propounding a

startling discovery he ejaculated " Sir, why is your dog so lean ?" With a convulsion of laughter wrinkling up his eyes Visvesvaraya replied " Sir, it is a Brahmin dog."

An incident is on record that when the Mysore University authorities approached him with a request to accept the honorary doctorate degree, he declined the honour with the remark "I do not expect any favour at the hands of my own child."

The servant entered with a card on the silver salver. Visvesvaraya glanced at the card and guessed that the visitor would plead for journalism and a cheque. He snapped " Show him in."

A prosperous looking man best dressed in clothes that credit could buy approached him with the slow dignity of a ferry coming into the dock. When he cried " hullo . . . " his voice badly wanted sand-papering. He gave a sharp lecture on how democracy means ill-informed lads with power. Then he whipped from his pocket a scroll and gently slipped it into the hands of his host. After a pause he said " Political life without a Political Science Quarterly is an aching nothing." On his face was the unmistakable impression of a person who after an acrobatic feat on the stage waits for the applause. With ponderous sarcasm Visvesvaraya said " you want me to be the mid-wife for a still-born baby."

Visvesvaraya's lightest whispers are laid up in cedar. They are of a kind which the nation cannot willingly let die. His short electrical sentences have the prophetic ring, the telling effect of a proverb. His words have

passed into man's common thought and week-day phrase. In one remarkable sentence he portrays Henry Ford: " He handles money but does not allow money to handle him." Speaking on the opulence of experts he says ""There are too many advisers but no wisdom among them." Then again, " A well equipped workshop in a district is more useful than an arts college." He pleads for ' bridal training ' and not for ' chaining up the daughters.'

Is he a helpless pawn of destiny or a man of action ? The answer is obvious. He has erected effort into a new deity : " Success depends very largely on your own capacity, integrity and keenness for work. To men of capacity and intelligence, such application will only prove the *open sesame* to many a first class opportunity." He despises persons ready to sponge on any relative than work. For such Do-nothings he has no more pity than a demonstrator in a physiological amphi-theatre.

It is his strict sense of discipline that has raised him to the highest pinnacle of fame. During his own lifetime fame has grown hoarse with shouting. His life is the story of stern purpose, dogged devotion and stainless integrity. His integrity has broken through the clouds of envy and detraction and shines with a blinding light.

His virtues are imitable. There is in him manifest sincerity. It is said that honesty varies with the strain put on it. But Visvesvaraya has a clean page in the book of Recording Angel. As dewan while on tour he carried with him two sets of candles labelled " Govern-

ment" and "Personal." He burned the former when he attended to official papers and the latter when he sent letters to his friends. In spite of the jolly certainty that the government would pay for the privilege, he never utilised a pin for his personal use.

He is a miracle of order. He does not allow important dispatches to ripen. The shelves are labelled. Index and cross-references are brought up-to-date. The array of facts comes to him quick as Ariel to the call of Prospero. He did not memorize the word tidy from Smile's book in his school days. It is a natural part of his mind.

He is a devout believer in the gospel of work. To him man is a unit of mechanical power for the production of wealth. If this belief is pushed to its active conclusion then it will make man an impossible thing. He considers work-shops as the shrines for the Ascent of Man. Sustained and continuous work is a part of his nature and also a part of his strength. He regularly works for fifty weeks in a year and invalidism is a strange experience to him.

He casts a fling of quiet anger against sloth when he says "No one is any the worse for hard work. 'The more energy we put forth' said an eminent German to me 'and the more we use our intelligence, the greater the pleasure, provided we do not overdo it to the point of fatigue.' Unless people consider slackness a disgrace, there is no hope of improvement." Continuing he remarks, "with us, according to custom and tradition, the charm of life consists in ease."

People have come to regard him as Public Energy No. 1.

He grubs about in book-shops for volumes the release of which is noticed in advance. If he digs up the copy from the stalls he will manage to secure it at any price. The saucer--eyed proprietor follows him down the steps into the car, which purrs up to the door. Then he sings out " Up-to-date-ness is a drug in the modern market." The remark visibly moves his customer. As the lucky proprietor is bursting with eagerness to put some life into his anaemic bank balance the car leaps forward with a bound. As it skids into the Marine Drive Visvesvaraya is deep in his new find. He makes audible noises in his mouth like the Calcutta Alderman over his fifth plate of Rasagullas.

In the American parlance conscience is a luxury to him. Still he has bowels of compassion. He distributes his special pensions (£2,000|- year) to his necessitous friends. Smart students who whine of their misery can woo tears to his eyes and money from his purse. It is said that the most interesting portion of a modern girl's letter is the foot-note. The most interesting part of Visvesvaraya's letter is the drop of kindness behind the wax seal.

When he pleads for planning the note of his sincerity lifts his voice almost to a chant. But he is a little inclined to play the magnifico at home., His domestic establishment is highly expensive. The looks of those who surround him do credit to him. He has a singular disposition to pay enormously even for small services.



Photo. K. Niwa

Sir M. Visvesvaraya Feted By The Ministers Of Japan.

"I am not weary; so long as I live on earth, I intend to conquer at least my own little foot of territory afresh everyday"

GOETHE

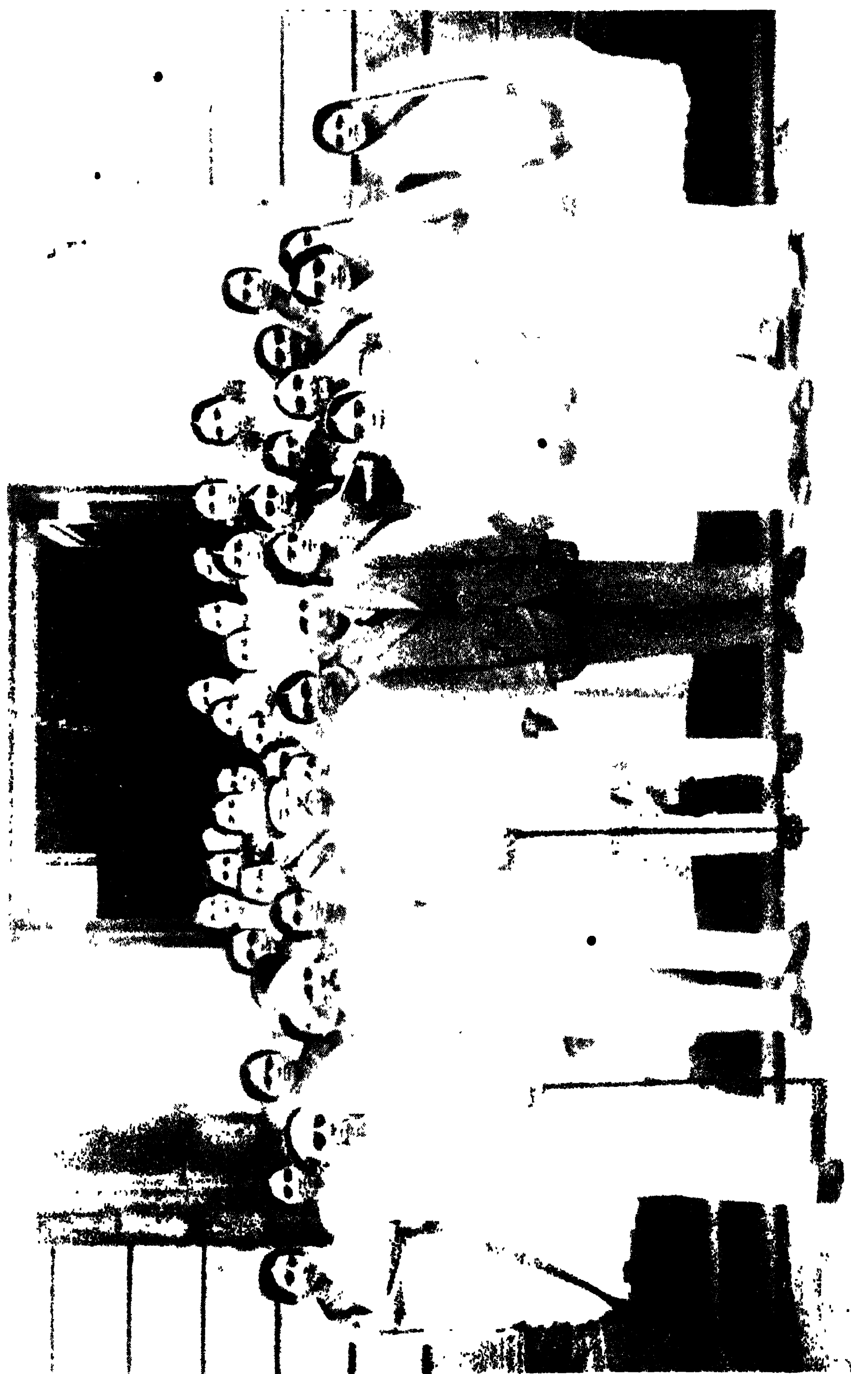
Chapter Two

IT is not difficult to imagine a strip of a boy, with the eyes of a sensitive young poet playing in the courtyard of a modest house on the outskirts of the town. There he would construct paper boats, dig miniature tanks, empty pails of water and set sail the fragile canoe with his diminutive hands. When he lifted his shapely head his intelligent face with its regular features was preceptibly illumined by the flash of his jewel-like eyes and his odd temperament confirmed by large ears and well-modelled nose. From time to time he would rush into the neighbouring paddy-fields, uproot a handful of full-grown plants and fix them up on the slopes of his artificial lake. He would wonder how he might ever carpet the endless tracts with smiling fields. Then he would open his box of paints and design his wild-cuckoo-land on a piece of card-board showing a rich and varied flora.

The infant critic felt that all things in the town wanted spirit. Small things happened in their small way and on a scale that was to his 'going' mind contemptible. The lad was introverted and perpetually occupied in his own thoughts. Here the earlier symptoms of his heroology are seen.

Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya was born in Kolar, on the 15th September, 1861. Though springing from a poor station he had many virtues to support him. His mother was a discreet lady of meek spirit. With fervent zeal she looked into the almanac for holy days. His father was a commoner, whose bright commanding intellect had earned for him a recognised position in the state. He made a pilgrimage to Benares, where he appealed to Lord Visvesvara to bless him with a son. One result of his prayerful meditation was — Visvesvaraya. He turned to be a talented child. His mother over-stowed him with Sanskrit tags and quacker mottoes. He never got on easy terms with his prayers and used them as a protective spell against thunder showers. His religious beliefs are now more negative than positive.

He was sent to the local school and studied assiduously. His class-mates signed a round robin refusing to compete for the prizes. Perseverence had become the rule of his life by the time he had struck ten. Listening to the liquid notes of the tropical birds or basking in sunlight filtered through the yellowing leaves he heard the mathematical discourses of his father.



While entering on his teens he had a staightened time and weathered those years by a firm resolution. If he would lock his teeth on a bit of conviction he would carry it through hell and high waters. The only good-luck he ever had was the ability to overcome bad luck. He began his life without a background of wealthy uncles so his faculties came early into play. Soon there was a break in the monotony of rural life. There was the adventure of migrating on foot to Bangalore. It is a pious article of belief that he fell unconscious on the way and nursed back to life by a shepherd.

Fortunately a time-limit was set up to his derelict misery. As his intellect and instinct tended to work he was unable to tear himself from his books and plunge into gaieties. He entered Central College, Bangalore, where delights were in store for an already passionate little Thinker. He was solitary by nature and " wished all the people away." Here is the germ of one of his strongest traits—loneliness. At times he was obsessed with the gaunt ribs and ravening hunger of the masses and saw in himself their champion and defender. He visited their dwellings not with a patronising chaff but to gain heart-quickening experience. There were no half-measures with him. As a rule he was abominably rude to defeatists. This quality he has not yet disowned.

In 1881 he was squeezed into something called a graduate. Dewan Rangacharlu who was looking for talent was very taken with him. He made haste to send him as a state scholar to the Engineering College, Poona. Visvesvaraya had the competitive instinct and graduated L.C.E., obtaining the first rank. He began to go

forward with a swing and became the hope of a thousand doting mammas.

He answered no advertisement to secure employment nor was he an incorrigible unemployable. His exceptionally high technical skill got him the right job. He set his foot manfully on the lowest rung of the official ladder and mounted steadily to the top. Every step in the ascent was won honourably. He was appointed as an assistant engineer in the public works department, Bombay government. It proved a good opening for him. For seven years he served in the Nasik, Poona and Khandesh districts and constructed irrigation works of rare merit.

Then he was posted as an executive engineer, which office he held till 1904. In the same year he was deputed by the Bombay government to the Simla Irrigation Conference. He drew up a water supply and drainage scheme to the city of Aden in 1907. Before his retirement as a sanitary engineer he took charge of superintending offices of two more divisions. His vitality and output became nothing short of prodigeous.

As an engineer he towers among his contemporaries. He is regarded in his own age as a marvel. He belongs to an altogether different solar system. He patented the automatic gates for Lake Fife; conceived the Block System under the Nira Canal and developed a self-acting module. Automatic gates invented by him are copied all over the world and are used in the Panama Canal. His Block System has sustained his fame. Sir John Mackenzie, did not err when he declared on the floor of the Bombay Assembly "The development of this

system is due entirely to the genius of Mr. M. Visvesvaraya." While drafting a scheme, he concentrates his entire attention on the grand features and with few master-strokes produces astonishing results.

It will be a forbidding list to enumerate the states which have sought his advice as a consulting engineer. Some of them are Hyderabad, Baroda, Gwalior, Indore, Kolhapur, Bhavanagar, Sangli, Akalkot, Phaltan, Wankaner and Morvi. He is often consulted by the Bombay, Karachi, Sukkur, Surat, Dhulia, Nasik, Phandarpur, Dharwar, Bijapur, Nagpur and other municipalities. In the spheres of town-planning, flood-control, sanitation and water-supply he is unmatched. He has received full homage from his contemporaries all over the globe. His head is full of projects as the Bombay suburban trains at 5 o'clock in the evening will be filled with stenotypists.

Lord Sydenham, who was not given to eulogy, referred to Visvesvaraya as "a very able engineer." His Exalted Highness the nizam of Hyderabad in reply to an address said "I would first like to state that praise is due to Mr. M. Visvesvaraya." In 1937, at the request of the Council of the Institute of Civil Engineers, London, Sir Alexander Gibb wrote to Visvesvaraya "offering him the heartiest congratulations of the Institution of Civil Engineers" adding "your services to the engineering profession during the long career and your association with the Institution during the fifty years that your name has been upon its Roll, have been much appreciated and valued by the Council."

These genuine fragments are more conclusive than volumes. They show that his name will remain not unnoticed in the catalogue of Indian Museum but will also live as a bright spot in the memory of posterity. The country is fortunate in benefiting by the fruits of the golden autumn of his mind. The spirit of his undertaking is imbedded in the lines of Sir Henry Wotton :

"I have done one braver thing
Than all the worthies did,
And yet a braver thence doth spring,
Which is, to keep that hid."

I am not always in tune for great emotions, and without them I am negligible.

GOETHE

Chapter Three

IN 1908 he went on a tour of Europe and America. His fame had preceded him. It had reached distant shores as a man of genius whose scientific persuits had given an impetus to the public mind. Many doors were thrown open to him. The Hyderabad government cabled to him requesting for his services in connection with the cyclone havoc. He abruptly broke his tour and returned home. Again in 1935 he visited America and Europe. He was honoured by academies and introduced to men of consequence. He was entertained and feted by Henry Ford and the nobility of the Old World. His foreign tour was a triumph.

He accepted the offer of the nizam's government to be a special consulting engineer. Later he was invited by His Highness the maharaja of Mysore to spare his services for the enrichment of his state. He accepted

the post of the Chief Engineer on the specific understanding that he would be afforded facilities to work out his schemes on industrialization and technical education. From 1909 to 1912 he worked as the Chief Engineer, public works department, Mysore government.

In 1912 the choice of the maharaja for the dewan's purple fell on an engineer. The elevation of a technical officer for that lofty station aroused envy, the green-eyed monster. The attempts made to deride him proved a hopeless misfire. Success came to him without the asking. For six and half years he acted as dewan and made himself strong in the hearts of the people. He floated his name to after-ages in the rich streams of Mysore's magnificence.

His mind did quit at an early age the enervating atmosphere of sloth to the brighter skies of hustle. Those who are conspicuous in tilt yards and ball-rooms cannot aspire to essay on bold and useful innovations. His invincible love for work found a wider sphere after his retirement. In 1921 he was appointed by the Bombay government the Chairman of the Committee on Technical and Industrial Education. He served as a member of the Back Bay Enquiry Committee and did valuable work. His fame reached spiral heights when he presided over one of its sittings held in the House of Lords. He was a senior member of a Committee of Two Engineers appointed by the Bombay government to investigate and report on the engineering aspects of the Lloyd Barrage Construction Works, Sukkur. He acted with exemplary success as the retrenchment adviser to the Bombay and Karachi municipalities.

In 1923 he presided over the Tenth Session of the All-India Science Congress held at Lucknow. His address is a fine specimen of brilliance and brevity. He was the President of the All-India Economic Conference in 1924. In 1935 he was appointed the Chairman of the Indian Economic Enquiry Committee. Again in 1938 the Bombay government appointed him the Chairman of the Irrigation Inquiry Committee. He is elected the President of the Court of the Indian Institute of Science. Recently he advised its staff to commercialize researches. The lives of very few recorded great men in India is illumined by such valuable work accomplished in committees.

Governments and centres of learning have loaded him with high and enviable honours. He was created C.I.E. in 1911; and K.C.I.E., in 1915. The Diploma of Honorary Silver Jubilee Membership of the Indian Science Congress was conferred on him in 1938 by His Excellency the Viceroy, for his notable work done in the application of science to industry. The Calcutta University honoured him with a D.Sc., in 1923. Bombay University gave him LL.D., in 1931 and in 1937 the Benares Hindu University bestowed on him the D.Litt., degree.

It is small wonder if this leader of the human race in the career of improvement is the object of unfeigned esteem and enthusiastic admiration.

Yield, O thou my daily striving,
Best of all the joys of living,
This is to see the consummation,
Empty dreams ? Nay, never, never,
Naked boughs, but not for ever.
Fruit and foliage—my creation'

GOETHE

CHAPTER FOUR

PROPHETS are stoned in their own age and country. Socrates had to take the cup of hemlock from the weeping goaler to humour the follies of the Athenian mob. The maid of Orleans was burned at the stake as she was obstinate in unbelief. The freedom-loving English branded Wallace as a toad for his patriotic convictions. John of Leyden was starved in the Church Tower, because he considered religion as a species of narcotic. In the recent past even in England, the island in the silver-set sea, the government regulated the length of a merchant's shoes, roasted a man for his religion and pulled a Jew's tooth if he did not pay a contribution. The stake for the heretics is gone and the pillory is taken down. But severe lampooning has taken their place.

A howl of contumely was raised when Visvesvaraya unfolded his nation-building projects. A civilian officer

declared on the floor of the Assembly that it was a grandoise idea to stop the course of a mighty river. The feeble-hearted screamed that he was dabbling in magic. They suspected that some Babylonian enchantress might have passed into his hands a cup of sorceries. The enlightened elements discredited his schemes as an old wives tale and even feared that he might turn castles into sand heaps. The detractors were like the sands of sea for number.

But the stream of change flowed onward. The dikes of prejudice which could resist a low tide were not strong enough to keep out the spring-tide. The boundaries which had excluded innovation held it in.

As dewan of Mysore, Visvesvaraya demonstrably proved that he was a new kind of statesman compared with the traditional type. He made administrators look to Mysore as the model of what a state should be. He had to regenerate it at a time when the world was on the boil. He translated his philosophy of industrialization into actual institutions. When he laid down the reins of office a keen observer remarked " Model Mysore wants no making. It is already made by Sir M. Visvesvaraya." He had four tasks before him—(i) to give an enormous impetus to industry and trade; (ii) to change the oppressive burdens of a social system which wore hodden grey; (iii) to leaven the masses by spreading cultural riches and (iv) to make the people think, investigate, organize and initiate measures of progress in a variety of matters.

He believed that the state was identified with the guarantee of stability, order and progress. So he used

the state machinery to develop the quality of its citizens: "Government expects every citizen to be a worker. No subject of His Highness in this state should be content to remain a spectator."

He directed frustration, aimlessness and supine indolence into the channels of full and purposive living. A positive determination to cure economic ills was a point of overriding importance in his programme. He exhorted the people to follow in the wake of other countries in the pursuit of material prosperity. He pleaded that their ideals should be brought into line with the standards of the west. "There is a yearning for the old ideals and a half-hearted acquiesence in the new and, on the whole, the genius of the people is for standing still."

It is pertinent to remark that his acid criticism on the Hindu ideal of life is only true with much qualification. "The Hindu ideal of life is that this world is a preparation for the next and not a place to stay in and make ourselves comfortable." In fact this is the Christian ideal.

The dewan saw the life of the people being led up blind alleys. As his optimism was tempered by reflection, it enabled him to realize that the development of industries alone was the basis of collective prosperity. This was possible provided a change was effected in the national thought and feeling. He knew that it was wrong to lift rabbits by the ears. So, mass education became another plank of his programme. He was reinforced in his conviction that education would at least improve the quality of unborn generations.

Like a child that nerves itself to open a suspected cup-board he came to grips with fossilized traditions and fought and subdued them. Efficiency was his nostalgic : " If the intelligence of our people is kept undeveloped, their skill untrained, their activities unstimulated, the average standards of working and living will remain low, and the country will continue to be populated, as at present, by unskilled and ignorant masses who, in times of scarcity or stress, will be unable to help themselves. His Highness' government have this in view in introducing the various measures for improving the economic efficiency of our people."

His regime was an epitome of progress. It was a gigantic experiment which moulded everything to a plan. The table-land was covered with rich cultivation. The villages became self-contained. Enthusiasm for elegant literature allied itself to a spirit of industrial enterprise. The pendulum swung decisively in the direction of rapid industrialization. The Mysore sandal-oil and silks were carried to the palaces of Europe. The Mysore troops gallantly fought the empire battles on the Continent. He used all his power to cajole, coax and press the citizens to familiarize themselves with the progress made in science and technology. The idea that a high standard of living is the mark of healthy civilization was popularized. The purity and efficiency of the administration were elevated. He turned the lyre to a democratic strain. The officials and the masses were brought into an organic relation. This new character gave the administration a solidity and a strength not known before. The dewan substituted despair with faith and preached that poverty was not the result of



Photo G. V. Is

SRI KRISHNARAJENDRA SAGARA DAM.



Photo: G. V. Iswar

ANOTHER VIEW



Photo. G. V. Iswa

THE BREAKERS

divine decree. He built up the prosperity of the state with bricks of real experience.

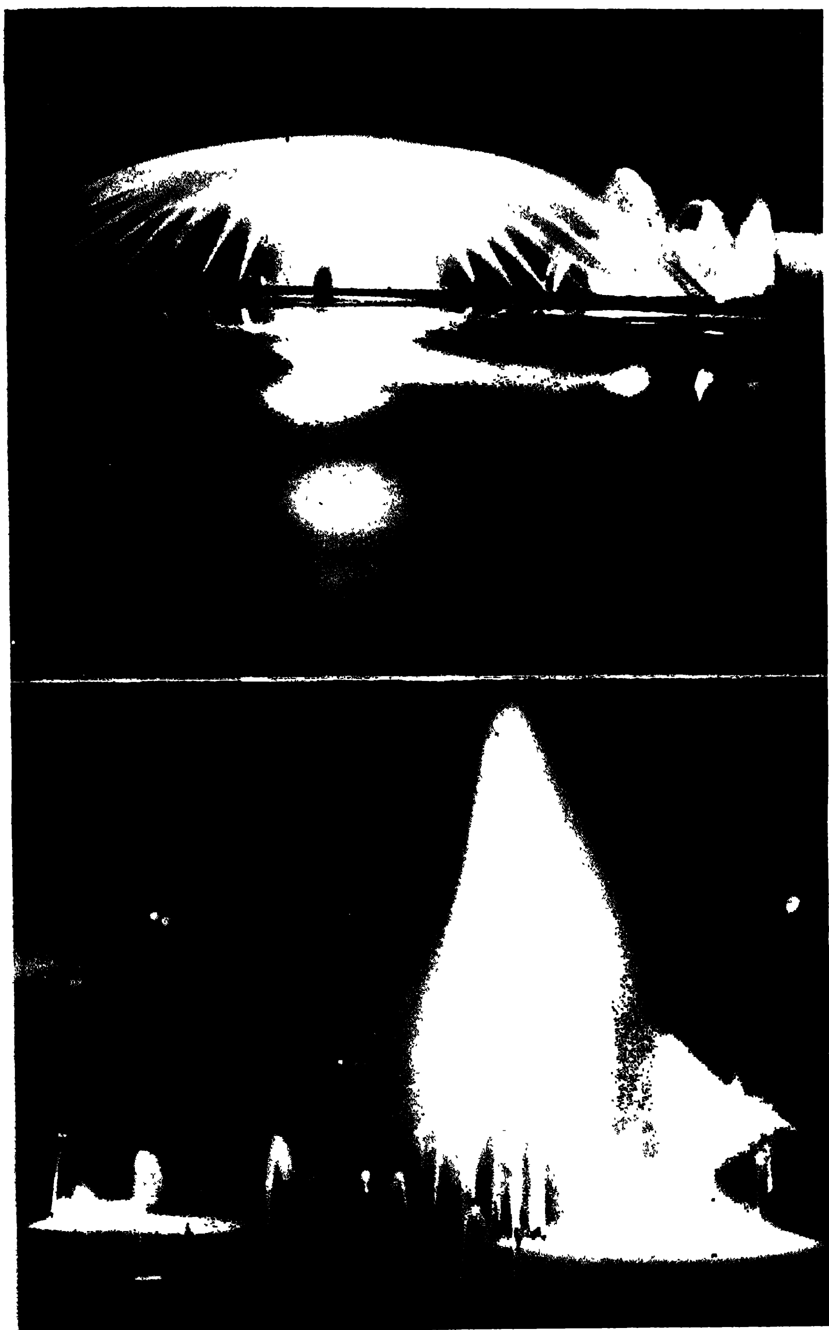
The thought of the time was to clog the wheels of the Jagannath charriot of progress. The dewan was the great spokesman of the idea of practical efficiency. In the teeth of snarling jealousies he pushed with vigour his plans. Soon their success exercised a paralysing charm. The truth of the weighty saying " virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed " shone forth in this severe trial. The vehemence of opposition waxed fainter. The whirlgig of Time shamed his critics.

The irrigational schemes of Visvesvaraya made arid tracts burst into vegetation. A multitude of canals were dug in the soft and yielding soil. The husbandman who committed the seed to the earth reaped a golden harvest. Mysore was converted into a royal park. A short bus-ride from the metropolis takes the visitor to Krishnarajasagar, where the Cauvery flows in silvery inks. Visvesvaraya threw a dam across the foaming torrents and constructed a magnificent reservoir. The dam built by the efforts of art and labour resists the influences of time and violence. It was the first practical attempt to impound the waters of Cauvery which for ages were allowed to run to waste. Its main object was to provide irrigation to perennial crops and to protect the supply of electric power. In 1906 the hot weather flow in the river was only 94 cusecs. This scanty and fluctuating flow necessitated the Mysore Durbar to construct temporary sand-bag dams over the anicuts on the Cauvery and its tributaries at a cost of nearly half a lakh of rupees every year. In spite of these costly

river conservancy works a sum of £38,000 had to be paid as rebate to the Gold Mining companies between the years 1903 and 1914. The reservoir is 130 feet high and impounds 41,500 million cubic feet of water. This marvel of engineering skill is built at a cost of Rs. 2½ crores and designed to irrigate 1,50,000 acres. By the Cauvery Arbitration Award the Mysore Durbar is bound to deliver a constant supply of 900 cubic feet of water per second regularly in the hot weather. The low water flow at Sivasamudram is now almost ten times what it was in 1906.

The visitor feels when he surveys this artificial lake stretching over 49½ square miles that the voice of fame, so prone to magnify, had made an adequate report of the myriad-minded genius of Visvesvaraya. It is a brave project : a challenge and a symbol, a challenge to the forces of negation and a symbol from which the state can draw the plenteousness of Nature's abundant grace. The people are conscious of its significance and thereby have found a new heart in it.

The impetuous sheets of water which rush through the escape vents, laughingly riot on, and shoot past the rocky boulders, forming beautiful cascades. The foci where the torrents meet is chaotic and resembles Dante's inferno. From its bowels streams of molten lead are sent forth and they glide through the rugged rocks. The directional push of the currents produces water-columns in which all the vivid hues of a rainbow are mirrored. It is animating to witness the feathery foam, the rebellious flying sprays and the splash of water. As the eye pauses over the scene the mind will be torn by a conflicting emotion. Pride and humility,



"Each Fountain Conveys an Emotional Message."

From The Painting By G. I. [illegible]

calm and violence, security and disaster and a host of other feelings grip us.

On one of the river-beds are sprinkled a series of terraces separated from one another by narrow strips of water. The terrain on each flank is clothed with illumined trees whose leaves are alive, whimpering and sighing and always eloquent of some emotion. Flower-beds of red salvias, Solomon-pink petunias, blue daisies and yellow cannas exhale sweet perfume. Glittering fountains span the gardens like baby-rainbows. This beautiful bosom of country is called Brindavan and is something glorious to behold. Its magic of smiling terraces, miniature water-falls and flood-lit fountains is the work of the engineer wizard, Visvesvaraya.

The builder of the enchanting gardens seems to have been influenced by the principle "Do not set out to degrade Her in order that you may be considered original. Arrange Her forms in a satisfying pattern, translate Her objects with respect, give Her moods sincerely."

The fountains do not display a tailor-made uniformity but an endless variety. The emotional intention has found a fine expression in the colour-scheme. The rich brown of Rembrandt, the vinuous tints of Monticelli and the blue nocturnes of Whistler are cunningly commingled in it. The Moghal rhythmic impulse has expressed itself in those dome-like and conical decorative styles. It is hardly too much if we say that there is no weak-link in the colour-scheme.

Some fountains start with orange or red or violet and run the following track: yellow, green, blue, purple,

crimson and back to their colour again. The whole gamut of the emotion is translated into colour. The tonic note of some fountains is orange and the dominant chord of others is violet. The swelling curves suggest ease and the zigzag ones unrest. The harsh contrasts of tones of some jets of water excite positive emotions. Each fountain conveys an emotional message. The fountain bathed in red is exciting, in yellow stimulating, in blue soothing and the mixtures have the blended qualities of the emotions.

When the visitor catches a glimpse of the egg-cup shaped gardens from the heights of the pavilion he will see the organised pattern emerging out of the jigsaw maze of light and shade. The feeling of equilibrium, the pattern-sense and the orchestration of colour are successfully welded. The strongest light is close to the strongest dark. The deliberate discords are a thing of beauty. The 140 feet vertical fountain which is installed in the rivers centre is "monkishly aloof". The rocket-like rise and the precipitous decent of that water-tower is a fine commentary on the saying "Once we have command of rhythm we have command of the world."

Some fountains look cheerful, some solemn, some eerie and all have this quality in common — a lasting spell. They exhibit a fine combination of form, proportion and tone and bubble forth vigour, spontaneity and freshness. Even the most stubborn of cynics will raise his hat to the architect of the Dam, who had no poverty of ideas. Ducks both real and of celluloid waddle in the coloured pools. The graceful image of Lord Krishna twining round the cuddlesome figure of his celestial



BRINDAVAN

FROM THE PAINTING BY S. R. IYENGAR

consort, Radha transports us from the earthly to the ethereal regions. The peacock with its plumage studded with myriad coloured bulbs is no less appealing. Over these enchanted regions reigns alone the marble bust of the late His Highness Sri Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV, whose greatness like the magic arc-lamp lit the state. In the words of Keats, the poet "of Earth's first blood."

> "Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
> Fled is that music:—do I wake in sleep?"

The glorious regime as dewan of Mysore is the key-stone of Visvesvaraya's fame. The fertility of his initiative found its best expression during this period. It witnessed that regenerating stir in which the human mind rouses itself from torpor. There is not an element of order, strength and efficiency in the administration of Mysore which he did not powerfully contribute to introduce into the system and cause it to be adopted. One of his colleagues exclaimed that as the dewan was a man of facts and calculations he moved with him "with a rule and a pair of scales always in my pocket."

He aimed at organizing the national economy of the state for the benefit of all the citizens. To achieve this the production of consumers goods and manufactures was an evident necessity. He began his new economic policy by organizing economic conferences and on the erection of new enterprises. The object of the Economic Conference was "to raise the level of business capacity and earning power in the state."

One of the first tasks to which he set his hands was the speeding up of the communications. The Mysore trains were proverbially slow. The passengers had to

refer not to their watches but to a calendar. Visvesvaraya embarked on a forward railway policy. The lines were built in good shape and the road beds became excellent. An addition of 259½ miles to the existing length at an aggregate outlay of Rs. 130 lakhs was provided. They are now yielding a substantial revenue and have proved assets of great permanent value to the state.

Equal success was registered in connection with electrification. He used the potential water power for the generation of electricity. An earnest of the gigantic electric power schemes of Visvesvaraya was the Krishnarajasagar Reservoir.

Gone was the mental stupor of pre-Visvesvaraya days. The state made a tremendous turn towards education. The dewan was fanatically eager to banish illiteracy. His regime witnessed the peak figure in the number of primary schools. He built up a new culture, national in form and elevating in content. His efforts to found the Mysore University were not plain sailing The intelligentsia of Mysore was deeply attached to the Madras University with the silken meshes of a cultural net. With the march of time the ties grew stronger and the attempts of the daughter to set up a house of her own were naturally much resented. She was cajoled, awed and intimidated but became incurably obstinate. Nothing could hinder the realization of her design. Public opinion was singularly unanimous on the soundness of the main features of the scheme. Lord Hardinge hailed it with rapture. While the British Indian universities were professedly denominational this first university in Indian India was a new type of which the colleges formed an integral part. It is impossible not

to admire Visvesvaraya's vehement enthusiasm for its establishment:—

> "The population of Mysore being close upon six millions the attempts to provide ourselves with a University cannot be regarded as ambitious. In the United Kingdom, there is one University for every 2½ million of the population; in Canada and in Australia, there is one University for less than a million people. Our opportunities of benefiting from a University are not inferior to those of many of the existing Universities of Canada or Australia. We have nearly one thousand graduates engaged in various occupations in the state, nearly all of whom sympathise with the idea of a University and many of whom will actively work for it."

In 1913, he started the Chamarajendra Technical Institute at Mysore with the object of fostering indigenous industries of the state and to give instruction in the application of art to industry. The art-wares of the Institute have earned the warm commendation from all parts of the globe. To create an incentive to manual work in the rising generations he started the Mechanical Engineering School. The curve of Mysore's trade registered a sharp rise with the starting of the Mysore Bank and the Chamber of Commerce. The Department of Industries and Commerce was established "to device and elaborate schemes for immediate practical action and to collect statistics to serve as a bureau for industrial information". The Sandal Oil and Sericulture factories have become a lasting source of Mysore's wealth.

The state in its zeal for state ownership of key-industries did not limit the opportunities for private enter-

prise. A notable example of not allowing the policy of state management of basic industries operating disadvantageously to men of talent and initiative is the Mysore Chemical and Soap Works, Bangalore and Bombay. The fascinating career of its owner Mr. B. M. Srinivasiah is a superb expression of the new ideas and vital urges that pulsated the state.

Visvesvaraya's many-sided achievements imposed silence on the authors of tumult. Largely owing to his efforts the government of India recognised the claims of Mysore Durbar to the surplus revenue of the Civil and Military Station, Bangalore, and consented to pay the arrears of Rs. 43 lakhs to them. The amplitude of the grasp of his mind is revealed when this windfall with an addition of Rs. 7 lakhs was paid towards War Fund. It is one of the most telling diplomatic strokes achieved by him. In the delicate task of negotiating for the revision of the treaty of Mysore he played his cards with great skill. The treaty of Mysore concluded in 1881 embodied a Clause relating to the assumption of the control of the state at any time by the paramount power. At the dewan's instance the Instrument of Transfer was substituted by a new treaty dropping that humiliating Clause.

Visvesvaraya threw his full weight into the scales of reform. He effected changes in the administrative apparatus and also brought about a corresponding movement in the minds of the people. During his regime the financial position was stronger than it ever was in the history of the state. He introduced Efficiency Audit System. Every hamlet in the state was brought under the operation of Village Improvement Schemes. The

composition and function of the Assembly underwent a thorough change. The privilege of budget discussion and interpellation were accorded to the Legislative Council. The Mysore Civil Service Rules were revised and Taluk Manuals were published. A high standard of military discipline and morale was set up.

His projects had none of the vagueness which is the common fault of statesmen. So, he drew forth the ardent eulogies of even the late Vridhapitamaha M. Venkatakrishnaiya, who was a thorn in the flesh of all dewans. Says Visvesvaraya "Mr. Venkatakrishnaiya, who has an honourable record of public service extending over thirty years, has all through his life been 'again the government.' He is, if anything, partial to the present administration but he cannot shake off his old habit."

Mahatmaji, with an enigmatic smile on his lip told Visvesvaraya that he was informed he is ruining Mysore finances. Visvesvaraya requested Gandhiji to visit Mysore and verify the charge. Gandhiji came and saw how he had built up the prosperity of the state which was able to tide over the economic depression that followed the Great War. He declared in a public meeting that the people of Mysore were fortunate in having a remarkable statesman like Visvesvaraya as their countryman. This handsome tribute coming from the most dynamic personality of the world attest to Visvesvaraya's rare talents for administration.

It is said that rhetoricians are more frequently the disturbers than the rulers of a state. Visvesvaraya belongs to the illustrious band of statesmen like Washington and Jefferson who did not take rank as orators.

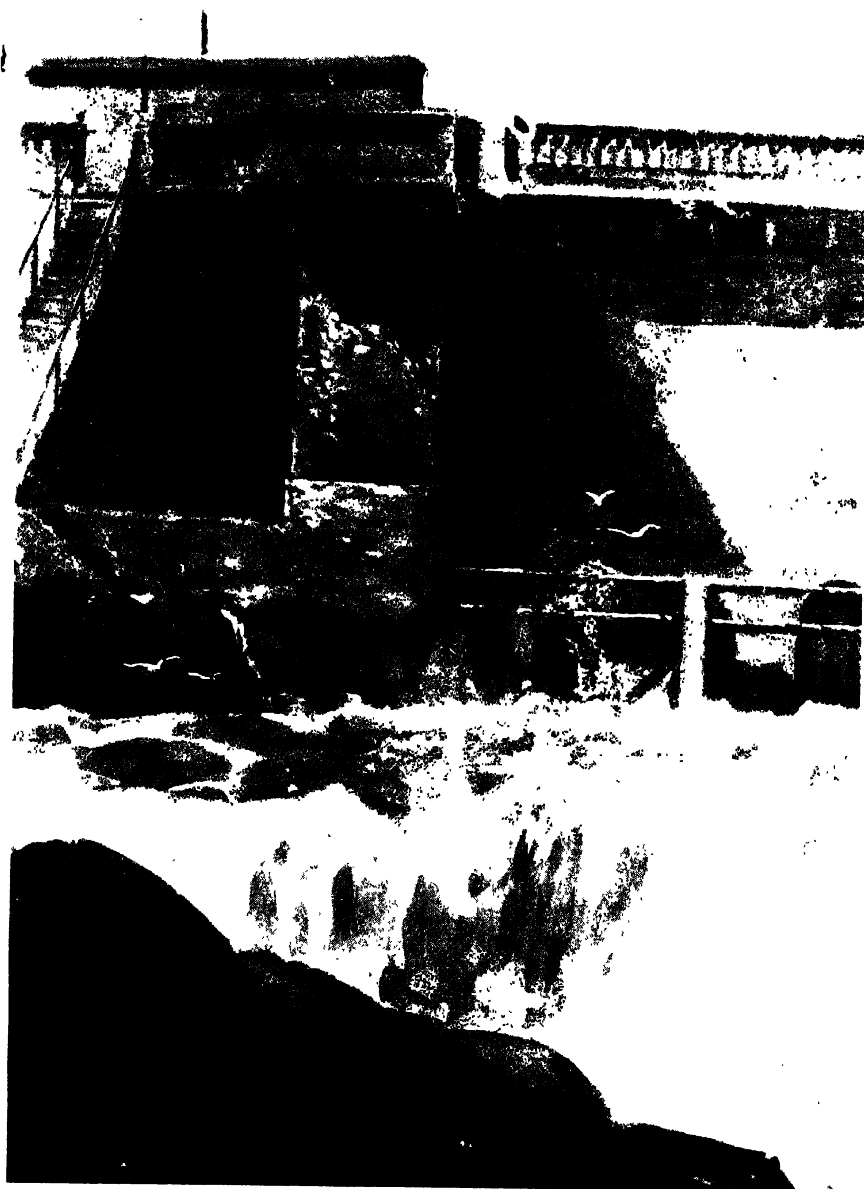
His speeches in the Mysore Representative Assembly are models of lucid statements and correct trains of reasoning. They are grave, dignified and replete with thought. He stated the government policy in few pithy sentences and the declaimers subsided into silence.

We can read whatever Visvesvaraya says, and that too without yawning. In a spirited defence of his policy he contends:

"I do not see why you should treat an increase of revenue and expenditure as if it were a calamity. If you look squarely into facts, you will find that in every civilised country, it is generally a sign of activity and prosperity. Increase of expenditure usually means increase of earning power. If you study the figures of foreign countries you will see that, in the United Kingdom, the public expenditure has gone up in the past twenty years by 140 per cent.; in the Colony of Canada by 300 per cent.; in Japan by as much as 660 per cent.; whereas during the same period the increase of expenditure in Mysore has been 60 per cent. To my mind, if there is to be any criticism, you must blame us for going slow."

The combined freedom and purity of his style, the logical closeness of his arguments and the statistical richness of his illustration held the House in a spell. This rare and distinctive gift of logical process acted in his hand like the spear of Ithuriel. His claim, his special gift, his lasting contribution lies in his extraordinary sincerity and insight. Addressing the Assembly on the need of communal harmony he says:—

"I would appeal to the members with all the eagerness I can command not to utilise these occasions for creating difficulties There are so few workers in the country



THE SLUICE OF THE DAM

From The Painting By S. R. [illegible]

that lack of harmony among these few would be a calamity. This is a time when co-ordination of effort and harmony of feeling and action are most wanted. At such a time, to encourage differences is, like sowing lantana in fruit garden. Disunion grows fast; let me assure you, it will be an unhappy day for you and me and the people of our state."

To foster a sense of corporate effort was the warp and woof of his mind.

"It is our interest and ambition slowly and gradually to enlist into the service of the country every person who has resource, ability or enthusiasm for public work."

He fashioned Mysore after his own heart. He pressed so much of reconditioning into six years. Industrialization established itself as a professed doctrine. The wealth and self-sufficiency of the state greatly increased and the people could "live of themselves." As dewan he did nothing rash. For, self command is a pronounced trait in him. Perhaps even as a baby, he never fell down unless he was pushed. His unworked schemes are sufficient to keep his successors busy, with their hands untied, for next thirty years.

The impression recorded by Edwin Montague in his *Indian Diary*, is a living testimony to Visvesvaraya's clearness of vision. Writes Montague "They were followed by the dewan of Mysore who came to speak to me about the Cauvery arbitration, and also about the desire to associate the Princes with the Second Chamber. He is quite right. Chelmsford objected, but I am sure Chelmsford is wrong."

The state forged ahead gaily forward but in 1918 came a thundercap. The overmastering figure whose

gospel proved the salvation of states resigned from the dewan-ship. The dice fell for Mysore when she lost the services of an administrator who was a force of his time, whose regime was a resounding success and who made the state efficient and prosperous. His resignation is one of the riddles in the history of Mysore's king-craft. It is a reasonable conjecture that the Executive Council opposed all progressive schemes from purely personal reasons. Is it possible to imagine a man of the first order of intellect, who proved a fine plenipotentiary while negotiating for the Cauvery Arbitration, whose handling of the Mysore treaty is acclaimed as a masterpiece of diplomacy and who is renowned to possess an unfaultering "sense of the possible" to throw down the dewan's purple unless he felt that his progress was arrested ? The ruler, who was gifted with a singularly quick eye for detecting merit and ability refused to accept his resignation for nearly six months. But as the conditions did not improve Visvesvaraya preferred to lay down power. But time has brought its sweet revenge. Sir Mirza Ismail by scrupulously following the plan of Visvesvaraya has made the dreams a reality. The only unfortunate result was that for nearly a decade Mysore was in a state of suspended animation.

The maharaja paid a handsome tribute to Visvesvaraya in a *Mysore Gazette Extraordinary* "Sir M. Visvesvaraya after a successful career in the Bombay Public Works Department, was appointed Chief Engineer to the Mysore Government in the month of November 1909. Three years later, he succeeded Mr. T. Ananda Rao, C.I.E., as dewan of Mysore, an appointment which he filled with conspicuous ability for over six



Photo: Clifton

SIR M. VISVESVARAYA
DEWAN OF MYSORE
(1912—1916)

years. During all this period, Sir M. Visvesvaraya worked with unswerving zeal and single-minded devotion to increase the material resources of the State. His administration as dewan has resulted in important and far-reaching developments, in education, irrigation works, railway communications and industries and he has laid the foundation for a prosperous and progressive future of the state. Sir M. Visvesvaraya carries with him in his retirement the esteem and best wishes of His Highness the Maharaja and all classes of his subjects."

Visvesvaraya has a pardonable partiality for Mysore. Four-and-half years after his retirement the Mysore government sought to invoke his help to save the Bhadravati Iron Works, which was on the verge of a collapse. This mother industry was started by Visvesvaraya six months prior to his retirement. His successor who had neither the power of improvization nor the practical instinct produced this crisis. He had really no hostile intention towards the industry but he thought it a good opportunity to display the arrow-flights of his imagination. When the acuteness of the crisis became known to the public they clamoured for Visvesvaraya.

Love of Mysore and not dislike of the perverseness of friends which is doubtless a sentiment with him that prompted Visvesvaraya to listen to their appeal. For six years he devoted his chief energies to the Iron Works. It is equipped with a modern charcoal blast furnace, pipe foundry, steel plant and a rolling mill. It provides employment for 7,000 persons. The only blast furnace in the east which utilizes charcoal in the reduction of the iron ore is installed here. It has a capacity of 80

tons per day. Some of the chief manufactures of the Works are: cast iron pipes, sluice gates, fountains, ornamental railings, lamp standards, spiral stair-cases, merchant bars, flats, hoops, strips, tar, wood preservatives, etc. Cement and paper factories are also situated in its immediate neighbourhood.

It is a slander to call this fundamental industry "a white elephant." The jeerings of the catastrophists which Visvesvaraya had to endure would have shaken a less tranquil mind. He repaired the miscarriages of his successors and now the progress recorded is financially healthy. In 1940 It yielded a profit of Rs. 26 lakhs. The Works will grow stronger with every year that passes. Visvesvaraya has proved that he can bite off more than he can chew and then chew it. His honorarium had mounted up to a lakh and twenty thousand rupees. His burning sincerity for industrial advance urged him to make a generous gesture. He wrote a letter to the government stating that there was a chance of the people mistaking that he started this concern to gratify his selfish ends. In order to dispel such notions he expressed his unwillingness to draw the amount. As Chairman of the Committee which supervised the design and construction of the Irwin Canal Works, he rendered notable services. The canal is taken off on the left bank of the Cauvery and flows towards the Hulikere ridge, where it crosses a tunnel 1¾ mile long. The cost of this project is estimated at Rs. 2 crores and the extent of irrigation contemplated under this canal system is 1,20,000 acres. In the heart of this irrigated tract, Mandya, a sugar factory capable of crushing 1,400 tons per day has been established. Seven crores of rupees

were expended on the Cauvery reservoir, the Hydro-electric Works and the Irrigation schemes and they are now yielding a fair return of 7 per cent.

His career of exceptional vigour and brilliance as an engineer has resulted in myriad jewel works. They are his sovereign title—to reverence and gratitude of the nation. In the racing parlance, he has not backed 'a loser.' Of all his schemes the results of the Iron Works were slow to materialise like a photographic print in a bath of hypo. The detractors tried to nip the petals before they blew. The aspersion that he put to hazard the fortunes of the state should only be regarded as the last cloud of an expiring storm, whose thunder is its knell.

He is a patriot deeply attached to the native soil; "Mysore is a country which is, in every way, worthy of our devotion and love." His name is a portion of Mysore's modernity. It has now outsoared the shadow of envy and is echoed in the voiceless hills. It will stand high in the roll of Indian administrators. But it will also be found in a more enviable list, in the list of those who have laboured and suffered much for the well-being of the human race.

The age of the beautiful is over ; ours one of emergency and implacable demands.

GOETHE

CHAPTER FIVE

HIS instinct is for engineering. He is an economist by irresistible vocation. Of Indian engineers he is incomparably the greatest. His critics have plagued his works on economics with the adjective "brilliant." In both these fields he wears the blue ribbon carrying the highest rank.

One goes away from Tagore with his feelings exalted; from Gandhiji with wonder and from Visvesvaraya with his mind filled.

As a writer Visvesvaraya is an architect in words. The language is finely shaded. The style is of granite strength and texture.

His works are the product of a full mind, remarkably polished and matured.

He is the superb product of the early twentieth century schoool of direct statement, submission to facts

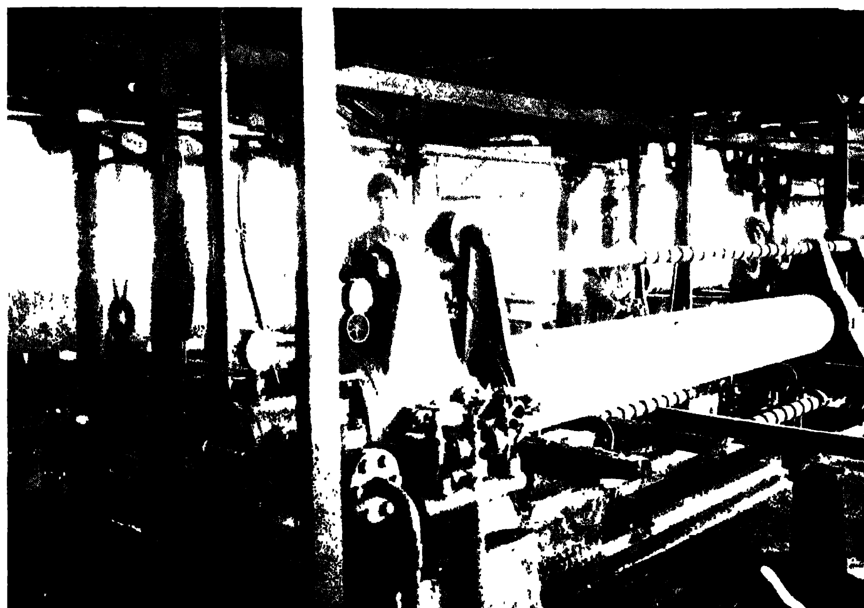
and adherence to experience. In him are united patient inquiry and breadth of outlook. He rightly emphasises method in a muddle. His works are professedly finished from the title to imprint.

He edits his drafts with meticulous care. Every syllable is poised and he painfully searches every sentence for a word he can lop off. This prolix minuteness is the result of his desire to maintain a high standard of accurate scholarship. Once he exclaimed "I can entrust you with my private property but not with my public opinions."

By mental stenography and systematic filing of a lifetime he has accumulated a vast reserve of facts. Addressing his assistant he said "Like a bee go to different hives, collect honey and pour on my lap." When he moves from his head-quarters a wagon of files neatly bound in blue ribbon follows him. While drafting a scheme he takes the introduction and conclusion together and chisels every word. But it is polished without the least taint of pedantry. He humourously calls this process "upsetting the butter tubs."

His chief aim is not merely "to express himself to himself" but to communicate to his fellow-men. He has the faculty for stripping the rotten flesh of sentimentalism from the cold anatomy of facts.

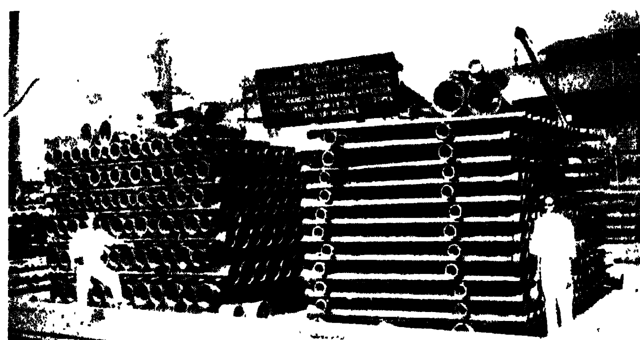
In 1912 he published *Reconstructing India.* This volume served as a vehicle for conveying the writer's notion of economic advancement. It laid a fast and durable hold on the public mind. A decade had to elapse before Visvesvaraya had hived up enough for another



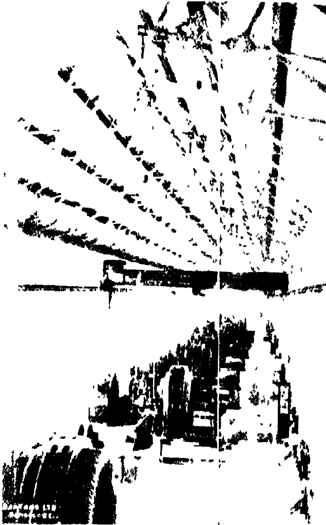
An Inside View



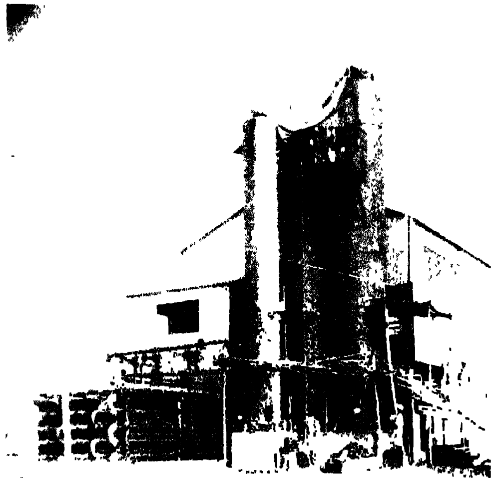
THE SANDAL-WOOD OIL FACTORY, MYS



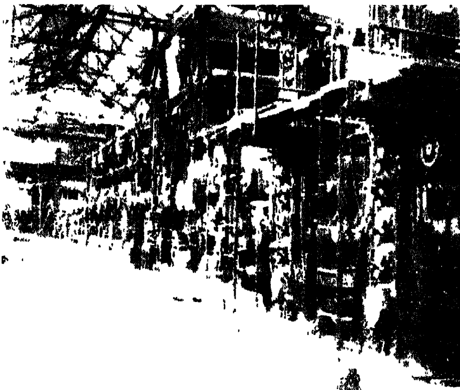




View: The Hydro Electric Works, Sivasamudram



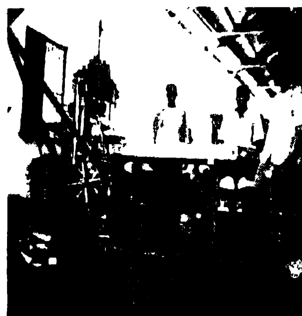
The Mysore Chemical & Fertilizer F[illegible]



Inside View: The Mysore Paper Mill



The Railway Station, Mysore







Photos: G. V. Iswar

publication. He brought out a volume on *Unemployment in India*, a subject on which he is is admirably qualified to speak. Being a high mathematician he subscribes to the idea "You can prove anything by figures." He draws his conclusions by the correlations established by his statistics. His correlations fill an Einstein with admiration. In 1933 he published *Industrializing India* and created the industrial psychology in the land.

In 1934 *Planned Economy for India* was released. He shot this bolt for good. In this monumental work the author reveals himself in his full splendour and strength. It is a sparkling, scholarly and ardent work produced with admirable fullness and clarity. He sets forth his thesis as "A larger aim is to suggest a creation of opportunities and a course of action calculated to strengthen the Indian in the business sphere that he may within the shortest period possible, become, as capable a citizen, as strong a national and as broad-minded an international, as his compeer in America, Europe or Japan."

The volume abounds in passages of equal merit.

His favourite epithet is "planning." He harps too often on this one spring. To plan is to act with purpose and fore-thought. Planning is the outgrowth of a social dynamics which places social organization above the will of the individual. The author of *Planned Economy* has a decided aversion for the cacophony of irreconcilable programmes. He observes that much of our trouble is due not to lack of plans but to a plethora of plans.

We have a perilous tendency to regard every pigeon-dealer a Darwin; every captain of a merchant vessel a Galileo, every victim of neurosis a Paramahamsa and every credulous ignoramus a Mahatma. The result is genius in conflict with the elegant nothings who rarely stumble forward.

He rightly believes that economic discipline is necessary to gain social ends and deplores the fragmentary policies of the Central government. He observes " One disappointing feature of the present dependency rule is that there is no plan, no policy to deal with the serious problems which confront this country and in the solution of which both the Government and the people can agree and act jointly." Again he says " The truth seems to be that the present Government by the very nature of its constitution is unable to initiate economic planning or to make any courageous advance in that direction." The remark sticks like a burr.

Any zealous admirer of his writings will be tempted rather too readily to quote passage after passage. The excellence of his style consists in its lucidity and force and its power of dealing with all sides of a question. He has uttered nothing base and nor is there any base metal in his writings.

He recommends a plan to remedy accumulatel deficiencies and to supply speedily the wants of the country. The second measure suggested is an organization to give effect, control and regulate the economic policies. Says Visvesvaraya : " A conscious will, a completed design and a capacity to circumvent seeming difficulties is what we might expect from the Economic Councils

charged with the high duty of furthering national well-being for national ends."

"The aim and end" is "regenerating the national will for accomplishing national well-being." A firm faith in the possibility of a better world pulses through his writings: "The age of new Capitalism—of balance, order and discipline, of co-operation between and within nations — is fast on us and it is the duty of India to drop off her age-long apathy, deficiencies and defects, and evolve a plan of work that will help her to retain the best features of the individualism to which she has long been so deeply attached and yet build up to advantage that system of collective effort without which economic salvation to-day is all but impossible. To solve this problem of problems, the ideals of sacrifice, surrender and service should be accepted in the place of mere individual gain, personal profit and single objective. That is the role that awaits new India."

His picture of a reconstructed India is exhilarating to visualise and not a night-mare to live in, "Unemployment, poverty and suffering would have been gradually brought under control and there would be a progressive tendency to make the country a better, lovelier and happier place to live in." This economic utopia is not the "dream of privileged idleness." He only suggests the altering of institutions to fit the facts. By family tradition he is seasoned in the South West winds which blow steadily from Cape Comorin to Kolar. The common trait among the Mokshagundam stock is the cult of commonsense. They are emotional teetotallers who will refuse a seat in the mystic balloon. Into all this Visvesvaraya was born. He is too "tough-

minded" to be duped by "well-meaning dreams." Napoleon once remarked "My heart is in my brain." Visvesvaraya is from head to foot all brain.

His works are free from the blight of excessive moderation. His arrows fly straight and hits the bulls-eye in a sentence. Says Visvesvaraya : "The country is ruled by the Secretary of State, who adds to the duty of that high office those of a banker to British trade with India. Most questions affecting this country are decided by him, and, as must be expected, he has been doing this after giving priority to the immediate needs and permanent interests of Great Britain."

The most meticulous economic antiquarian has not caught him in a major flaw. An incident is on record that one day Visvesvaraya asked a leading economist to select for his use some books from the Royal Asiatic Society Library on Indian industrialisation. The gentleman informed him that he ransacked the whole shelf but found only one useful volume, that is, *Planned Economy for India.* This book is the hardest to secure in the second-hand shops.

It is said that the government of India appointed a committee of experts to contradict some of the statements embodied in *Planned Economy for India.* The pundits could not detect a flaw to crush him with. They had the wisdom to give up the attempt as a wild goose chase.

To parody the writings of Visvesvaraya is an impossible adventure. Flights of fancy are out of his sphere The paragraphs are carefully churned. They are a model of brevity, ease and correctness. His conclusions

are guarded and therefore valuable. Those who do not appreciate his books are "educated beyond their capacity."

An eminent Indian once said that if he were about to be wrecked on a desert island, out of the ten books he would be choosing as his companion in exile *Nation Building* would remain at the top. In this brochure, written with easy naturalness the author is himself again. In everything that makes for tremendous popularity this work should be rated high. Its spell is irresistible. It reveals his anxious concern to attempt economic planning in the provinces which had become autonomous. The preface opens with an optimistic note "The change from the Dependency rule to Autonomy in the Province is a big fact. The consequential changes in the various spheres of the country's life have to be big too."

He gives the Congress governments a problem to ponder; "If confusion and waste of effort are to be avoided the Congress Ministers have soon to make up their minds as to the lines of national economic activity they propose to follow and announce an authoritative plan and programme." He is the avowed champion of mechanization and mass-prodction methods. But he does not exclude great efforts from being made to maintain the economic integrity of the primary producers of food. He is confident that the impact of techonological development will have its effects on the characterics of agriculture. A spirit of caution runs through his writings; "For the future, we should be guided, as far as possible, by the example of, and practices prevailing in, countries like the United Kingdom and the

United States of America care, however, being taken that the worst forms of Western industrialization are not reproduced here."

A marked rise in the standard of living, the most profitable exploitation of the country's resources and man-power and a rapid expansion of industries are the three dominant features of *Nation Building*. To achieve this objective he recommends the adoption of a coherently designed policy and a deliberate plan. Its compelling pages mirror his views on the Congress. They are as sound as they are fresh; "Happily, the Congress Party, which is the majority Party in the country, is united. It has national ideals, it is vigorously opposed to communalism, and even its opponents are impressed by its courage, sincerity and resolute earnestness. Its greatest asset is the vast man power of the country."

His insight into realities is so sure that his writings are often prophetic; "Whatever happens there should be no weakening of the goal of a strong and united India. The best guarantee for this will be the continued unbroken unity of the Congress Party itself. So long as the Party is united and unswerving in its aims and policies, the country is bound to advance. A great future awaits India."

His latest brochure *District Development Scheme—Progress by Forced Marches* is an authentic and full rounded picture of Indian district life. A cool and objective analysis is followed by a concrete plan and a plea for action. This scheme is intended for the reshapement of the economic structure in a district. Presented at a time when the interest in rural uplift is

at its peak this volume fills a real need. The astonishing leaps forward of his mind show that he is like Keats shepherd perpetually young and perpetually promising Says Sir Mokshagundam " The District Development Scheme described in this brochure aims at stimulating productive activities in the people by intense measures and methods. The immediate aim is to so multiply goods and services as to double the income within at the most a decade. A whirlwind campaign or drive is proposed to appeal to individuals and communities to force up production and maintain at any cost a minimum approved standard of living."

He believes that this world is too wicked to obtain preferences by gentle virtues. His picture of prosperous nations is true but he has given it a glossy finish. He observes " We live in a stubborn material environment and generally we have to work hard to get what we want. Prosperous nations are not always ~~those that~~ live in tracts where Nature is propitious but those who have learnt by past experience and suffering that conditions of living can be improved only by industry, organisation and technical skill."

His style portrays a firm and reasoned judgement. Says Visvesvaraya " On every current problem, *pros* and *cons* should be weighed, formulae and policies based on world experience evolved and a constructive plan prepared which the country can unhesitatingly accept and follow."

He is a Congressman of pre-Montague days and an empirical collectivist of the first water. His political opinions are the wise reversals of the crazy policies of

some of our politicians. He is as much averse to psuedo-liberty which meddles with every aspect of private life as to the system which believes in the deification of the policeman. He wants to press toward a larger measure of public control to promote the common welfare. In his writings he has presented a broad factual background for this collectivist trend. Few informed critics dispute the need for constructive planning. Obscurantists who vainly oppose this 'iron beasts epoch' will find their life a purgatory.

Visvesvaraya admires the elegant aristocracy, respects the industrious middle class and loves the sun-burnt peasantry. And through all his utterances blow the keen and cleansing wind of democracy.

A new public has arisen. It refuses to be fobbed off with far-fetched idealisms. It demands realism, a commodity which Visvesvaraya is able and willing to dole

His works are as much distinguished by insight as by literary power. They are a constant soaring over supersition and habit; prejudice and sloth, upto a world of perfect concord and corporate effort. He has neither the Olympian air nor delivers sage oracles. He spares us a sermon and leaves us a message. To Visvesvaraya industrialization has become a mission and is destined to become a crusade.

I have grown too old for everything, except the Truth. There is nothing great but the True, and the least of that has greatness. How glad I am that I have consecrated my life to the Truth.

GOETHE

Chapter Six

VISVESVARAYA has been hailed as an outstanding genius that India has produced. In the appreciation of such a genius the search-light of criticism should not be directed on the possible errors in his productions or criticisms inspired by envy. For, envy after all is the sincerest form of flattery.

Genius is distinguished by the height to which it can soar in a proper environment and any ungenerous criticism beyond the measure of justice will defeat its own purpose like a drug administered in too large a dose.

Says Owen Meredith :

> "Talk not of genius baffled
> Genius is master of man.
> Genius does what is must;
> Talent does what it can."

The energetic genius of Visvesvaraya is far-sighted and deep fathoming. It has an inspiration of its own to stimulate, to refresh and to fortify.

He is the embodiment of scientific spirit. Science whatever its detractors might say is secure on the powers that are eternal and will do her best and be blessed. It is this living faith that animates him. This scientific discipline has made him strong. And a strong soul achieves great things without the artificial stimulation of a faith in the divine.

Thought is the strongest exercised function in life. In him it dominates over other powers and has become 'passion in itself.' Severe self-discipline, enduring will power and ability to keep within the bounds of moderation are his distinguishing marks.

His is the gospel of mass self-reliance. It implies a ceaseless struggle and a burning aspiration, which are necessary to scale the supreme heights.

It is in the sacrifice that man becomes most himself. It is because of the sacrifice of many that causes become of value. Visvesvaraya's life is a stirring drama of self-sacrifice and action. Says Bernard Shaw "Self-sacrifice enables us to sacrifice other people without blushing." Visvesvaraya having sacrificed himself is prepared for enormous sacrifices from others in his ideal of achieving a disciplined and ever increasing power.

Economic backwardness of India has made Visvesvaraya possible. He is the lever and cause of a great movement. He is not the herald of those emotions with which the masses can be inspired but sets the masses in motion.



THAT DEAR PROJECT

In the machine age a nation should have to choose between going to the dogs or prevailing. To survive it must consciously adopt a fresh attitude towards life. Visvesvaraya has prepared the public to understand and accept the disconcerting change that is taking place in the domain of economic life. In him the manufacture of motor cars has become sentimentalized into " that dear project." He sees in the hostile attitude of the Simla Circles the thin end of the wedge which broadens to aggressive imperialism. No sturdy lying is necessary to save the credit of this fundamental industry. He has a resolution to find a manly highway to it. This project will mark the apotheosis of his spectacular course as an engineer.

Spending thousands of rupees from his life-saving he undertook a world tour to study the possibilities of motor industry in India. He has collected the necessary expert advice, patents, and design at a very heavy cost. His scheme is neatly turned out. What strikes one most in it is the enthusiasm he maintains, however, well moderated or veiled.

In civilized states automobile is one of the basic wants of a family. In America, where every fourth person owns a car, its importance is next only to food. There out of every seven persons gainfully employed one is in the automotive field. This premier industry is the greatest absorber of raw-materials, provides employment to skilled operatives, annihilates the barriers of time and distance and is a source of effective defence in times of national danger.

The tastes of our people are still rural. In India there are six million ox-carts pitted against a lakh and seven-

ty-three thousand motor vehicles. When her sister nations are motor-minded she can cling fast to her ox-carts at her own peril.

The age in which we live is predominantly economic. The machine has caused major-shifts in the modes of living. It is a world of push-buttons by which man has impressed into his service millions of mechanised horse power. It has involved violent disturbance in the placid life. It has also greatly reacted upon the volume of employment, the skills and the human factor in production. The one outstanding effect of mechanization is increased production at lower prices. According to Frederick C. Mills "It is the most compelling factor in the changing culture of modern man."

In India the population is below the margin of subsistence. The lack of modern technical knowledge has rendered living very uncertain. The great masses know ease and comfort only by want of them. This frightful spectacle of poverty and ignorance has roused in Visvesvaraya a great pity and a just indignation. His moral fibre revolts to the very root to see that we have not noticed, if not recognised, the utility of the "new economic marvels" brought on by the industrial and biological revolutions. They have in Mr. Hardy's phrase "made men and women serve smoke and fire than frost and sun." Poverty is eulogised as a virtue and new trends are strangled in their cradle. His credo is, therefore, industrialization. For, Industrialization makes possible a rise in the scale of living and a greater stability of economic conditions. It promotes culture in the highest sense and enables the country to parti-



Mr. P. B. Advani and Sir M. Visvesvaraya. Recently Mr. Advani was deputed to America to negotiate with some leading firms for the erection of the automobile plant in India

cipate in world economic dealings. His plea is entitled to the praise of diligence and good sense.

Economic protectionism is a means to industrialization. It is the sum total of measures adopted by the national economy unit for the purpose of advancing its interests in the field of world economy. The object of protective policy is the promotion of domestic production. Visvesvaraya is an avowed protectionist. Public opinion in India too is decidedly protectionist. In a period of transition, as in India, protection is essential to offset the temporary lead of older industrial nations.

Visvesvaraya is moved by a divine impatience of any waste of man-power. Condemning the appaling waste of time on trifles he pleads for pooling all the highest existing skill. He spares nobody, neither the government nor the people, castigates them harshly only to awaken the conscience and the energies. But knowing the country so well as he does he advocates moderation and not stagnation. His moderation is the essence of good sense and real wisdom.

It is absolute fact that the nation will not be able to pull her weight in the boat of progress unless the phobia and libido against industrialization are shaken off. It is not too late to repent and reform. Our only hope lies in the remaking of the nation on the lines suggested by Visvesvaraya. All prospects of advance will die in our bosom if we do not put an effective stop to the goose-cackle of 'return to ancient ways.'

By industrialization alone the levelling up of the masses to the point reached already by the most highly nourished and cultivated in mind is possible. It is

fundamentally futile to think of drawing the teeth of insurgent poverty by any other process. The devotion to old ideals will draw the nation off the track of progress and will not add a cubit to its stature. Then in what way our civilization is defective—not in artistic creation but in scientific attitude.

The dreams of the great pioneers of economic uplift like Ranade, Gokhale and J. N. Tata—the glorious trio —will be an accomplished fact if the schemes of Visvesvaraya are implemented by his patriotic countrymen.

The patriotism of Visvesvaraya is intense and eminently practical. His devotion to the cause of communal harmony and political solidarity was shown when he was elected the Chairman of the All Parties Conference. He feels that the Congress governments alone can deliver the goods and his advice is sought by all the influential personages in the country.

India is now in the throes of new movements like federation and responsible government in the states. Visvesvaraya anticipated and furthered these tendencies in their embryonic stages as early as 1918. He pleads for responsible government in the states as the only solvent against communal disorder and political agitation.

Mahatma Gandhi and Visvesvaraya are two personages who would add distinction to any epoch. Gandhiji is the apostle of diminution of wants whereas Visvesvaraya aspires to abolish poverty and to spread grace of life. The former has mystical enthusiasm and the latter incarnates practical rationalism. Visvesvaraya

has rigid control over sentiment but Gandhiji is full of spontaneous emotion.

Gandhiji is a steadfast believer in intuition and so the most powerful. The actions of Visvesvaraya are governed by the steadiest counsels. Ganhiji is a phenomenon and has attained celebrity like meteor in the political firmament and Visvesvaraya by the engineer's road. The difference that lies between Gandhiji and Visvesvaraya is the difference between the two aspects of the same Indian soul—the ideal and practical; the spiritual and material. Both are the symbols of a reawakened India. The bold saying of Epicurus " It is more desirable to be miserable by acting according to reason than to be happy in going against it " agrees with the notion of life of both. Both have bent the force of their understanding and directed all their energies to the good of their country as they concieve it.

What is of enduring interest in Visvesvaraya's philosophy of life is the faith that the conflict between the man and the machine can be averted by fore-thought and plan. No one realises as he does the evils of unplanned industrialization. But he lays equal emphasis upon the machine as an invaluable servant of man. The splendid advance in the means of transport has broken down the barriers of national life. But in backward economic regions a sudden change is as harmful as stagnation. Therefore gradualism and effective planning are indispensable to a country like India, where the masses need more means and better nurture.

Though it might appear that Visvesvaraya places undue emphasis upon collectivization and mechaniza-

tion, he has made it abundantly clear that a harmonious blend of the individual and national interests should be the ultimate ideal. Industrialization has become a necessary evil in the present age and no nation economically backward can hope to compete with other countries of the west on principles of naive simplicity of life. His philosophy has obtained a great deal of practical consent from scholars and statesmen.

His vision-picture aims at :

> "Every nation to be its own farmer; every individual to be its field labourer, and some sort of technologist; every individual in possession of scientific knowledge and technical skill, this according to our view, is the tendency of civilized nations."

In Japan few years ago a boy did not know how to handle a screw-driver and now he builds his own wireless set. Industrial revolution has released a new mechanical power of which man has to be the master or victim. Even in our country there is a ferment of new ideas and new expectations. She must develop in accordance with her own condition.

As an administrator, Visvesvaraya enabled Mysore to rouse herself up into a haven of security in the troubled years of the Great War. He never played the mischievous type of political chess, a tendency not uncommon in state's diplomacy. By example, and precept he won the people to the philosophy of industrialization, to the elegance of citizenship and to a healthy national character. He most vividly lit up the state by the glare of his genius.

Visvesvaraya has beheld all the splendours of an Indian Court, conversed with greatness in all its degrees and is idolized by the people. He had frequent invitations from myriad states and institutions but he has given no ear to either persuasions of profit of preferment. When a leading company requested him to be its chairman he wrote back "I have passed the age of earning money."

Is he in the decline of life, going down the hill? No. He has scored eighty, not out, and looks well-set for a century. He has still retained great vigour of thought:

"The vision and the faculty divine."

To us he is still a man, of age, rank and genius. To posterity he will remain a legend, whose works can only perish with the Indian nation.

He loves to call himself an old man but has retained three things of youth in him—integrity of ideas, a frank laugh and a fresh heart. There is something of controlled power, of boundless confidence, of steadfast adherence to beliefs and of onrushing invincibility radiating from his determined figure. At eighty he is not a decorative encumbrance but takes the wages of life like a man. He bends over the files for sixteen hours a day.

Visvesvaraya eats a bird-like meal. His rules of diet are simplicity itself. His principal reliance is in green salads, green vegetables, and properly prepared cereals. He is a teetotaller and does not apply sanctions to the Franco-Algerian impertinence swells during his Monday parties. He does lots of walking. To him old age is not a

thing to dread because he is living to the optimum the healthful life.

> "He has a stirring soul;
> Whatever it attempts or labours at
> Would wear out twenty bodies in another."

He has won the applause of the applauded. But success has not laid to sleep his talents. He is striving to help onward the great march of the human race. He does not revile the illustrious dead and looks forward with sanguine hope. Visvesvaraya records an incident: " On one occasion in Bombay as I was leaving his house after dinner, Mr. Ranade walked up with me to the outer landing. A friend of his, Mr. Modak, who has been ailing for a long time, was his guest. Pointing to the guests room, Mr. Ranade remarked, " Do you know that there is a friend of mine in that room who is suffering from a disease from which all India suffers, —namely paralysis." Like his noble friend Mr. Ranade, Visvesvaraya too has an instinctive antipathy for indecision and paralysis. He desires to keep the peoples' noses to the grindstone.

The Arabs have an old saying:

> "He who knows not he knows;
> He is a fool—shun him;
> He who knows not and knows he knows not;
> He is simple—teach him;
> He who knows and knows not he knows;
> He is asleep—wake him;
> He who knows and knows he knows;
> He is wise—follow him."

Visvesvaraya, whose intellectual confidence is entire represents the fourth sort.



SIR M. VISVESVARAYA

(From a photograph taken about 1911

He is emotionally lonely and has chosen for the evening of his life the solitary village that he knows and loved and explored as a boy. He must press himself often the door-bell of this new haunt so that it might not rust.

Meditation is his forte. In the silent watches of the night he clears his agonizing doubts, the empire-agitating-problems. His purity of heart, his soundness of principle and the elevation of his mind affect, interest and enchant one. Tranquil meditation has given him strength and steadfastness whether to do or to endure. He has inspired us all with breeze and sunshine.

He is living at a time when greatness has walked often. Mahatma Gandhi has captured our hearts. If he were not born, the cultural level of our country would have shrunk to a lower plane. Rabindranath Tagore has breathed strains of liquid melody into the soul of India. His sweet pipings 'soothe, heal and bless.' Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, a patriot of whom the nation is justly proud has given us the pass-word to freedom.

Scientists there will always be in legion but the like of Acharya Ray comes but one in centuries. The discoveries of Sir C. V. Raman have shot a revealing searchlight on the obscure recesses of thought. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Bhulabhai J. Desai are conspicuous among legal minds. Then comes Sarojini Naidu the best gifted woman this nation has produced. Her poems, 'knit up the ravelled sleave of care.' A beacon-light of hope to the down-trodden Mrs. Brijlal Nehru has a claim to our respect and gratitude. Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit

as the first woman minister has shown the capacity of Indian woman in the political sphere. The rich and powerful soul of Lady Vithaldas Thackersey vibrates to one note—to advance the cause of her sex in all that adds to intellect, creative achievement and virtue. Men of initiative and enterprise like Mr. Walchand Hirachand, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai and Mr. M. A. Master are the Day-star of a brighter day of industrialization than this land has yet seen. Their fame will rise and last.

Sir M. Visvesvaraya has carved a niche for himself. He has moved on his way through life heard, but by the public unseen. We can look with comfort and hope at his full and fruitful genius which has resolved the problem—how man can elevate himself.

When the Muse of History proceeds to estimate the character of this *bel esprit*, she will confidently inscribe his name on her shining tablets as a man of action who was always led by vision and never by circumstance, as an eminent statesman who was free from blind prejudice and blundering diplomacy and as a roving pioneer of whose loftiness of genius and innovation the present and succeeding generations of India must feel proud.